

Echo

COMMENT

Let's hope travellers move on peacefully

SOMETIMES the law moves so slowly it seems not to be moving at all. The case of the Dale Farm travellers' site went on for so long and so laboriously it seemed to have become a permanent fixture of the south Essex scene.

Time and again, just when matters finally seemed to have been brought to a conclusion, another legal loophole was found.

Once again, Basildon Council and Crays Hill would settle down wearily for another few years of stalemate. But now, at last, it really is all over bar the shouting.

The Law Lords, the highest court in the land, has upheld Basildon Council's eviction process. No further legal avenue exists for the Dale Farm travellers.

Talk of an appeal to the European Court of Human Rights is an illusion. The European court has already ruled the human right to a home does not overrule planning and conservation laws.

That is the issue at the nub of the Dale Farm affair. Travelling communities do not have the right to take over and develop green belt. On what grounds do they consider themselves exempt from laws and rules that govern every other citizen? Homelessness is not, and never has been, an issue. Alternative accommodation is on offer, if travellers are prepared to compromise. In any case, as Echo reports have made clear, many Dale Farm travellers already own houses in other parts of the British Isles. For everyone's sake, it is to be hoped the travellers accept these facts, and evacuate Dale Farm peacefully.

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